

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~NOFORN NOCONTRACT WNINTEL~~

PAGE:0027

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NST/GENEVA//START SIR  
NST/GENEVA//D/SPACE SIR  
NST/GENEVA//NTT SIR  
CINCLANTFLT VA  
FICEURLANT  
FOSIF WPAC  
SSO DIA  
SSO DIA//PASS TO OSDTSP  
SSO DIA//PASS TO DARPA KAY PULZONE  
SSO NME  
CMC  
CG MCDEC  
SSO GRNVAL  
SSO SNWD PAX//PASS TO NATC  
CIA//PASS TO CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS  
ZEM  
CONTROLS

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SECTION 3 OF 11  
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ZARF WNINTEL

BODY

SUBJECT: SCIENCE AND WEAPONS REVIEW CABLE,  
SW SWRC ~~████████~~ 26 AUGUST 1988

ASSEMBLY IN NOVEMBER 1987. ~~████~~

COMMENT:

SHEVARDNADZE'S SPEECH IS THE FIRST POSITIVE RESPONSE BY THE SOVIETS ABOUT THE SWEDISH INITIATIVE TO BAN ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS. UP UNTIL SHEVARDNADZE'S RECENT UN STATEMENT, THE SOVIETS AND THEIR WARSAW PACT CLIENTS HAVE BEEN SILENT OR WERE NEGATIVE ON THIS ISSUE. ALTHOUGH SHEVARDNADZE'S STATEMENT WAS NOT AN UNEQUIVOCAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL, WE BELIEVE THAT THE STATEMENT FROM A SENIOR SOVIET DIPLOMAT WILL ENCOURAGE THE SWEDES TO CONTINUE TO SEEK AND DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THIS PROPOSAL. THIS DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE SOVIETS FOR TWO IMPORTANT REASONS. ~~████████~~

FIRST, UNTIL THE STATEMENT BY SHEVARDNADZE, NO MAJOR POWER HAD ENDORSED THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL. IN FACT, IN PREVIOUS PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS, BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE USSR HAVE BEEN UNRECEPTIVE TO THE PROPOSAL. WITH THE SOVIETS ACKNOWLEDGING THE "IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL OF SWEDEN TO BAN THE USE OF BATTLEFIELD LASER WEAPONS," THEY MAY BE

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ATTEMPTING TO ASSUME THE "HIGH MORAL GROUND" IN THE EYES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. [REDACTED]

SECOND, STEADY ADVANCES BY MANY WESTERN NATIONS AND THE USSR OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS IN DEVELOPING LASER TECHNOLOGY MAKES THE FEASIBILITY OF ANTISENSOR-BATTLEFIELD-LASER WEAPONS A REALITY. THE SOVIETS, BY PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL, MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO COMPLICATE THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR WESTERN MILITARY LASER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAT THEY PERCEIVE ARE LIKELY TO PROCEED INTO FULL-SCALE ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. US RESEARCH AND WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE MUCH MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC SCRUTINY THAN IN THE USSR. THE SOVIETS MAY HOPE THEIR RECENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL WILL SUBJECT US AND WEST EUROPEAN MILITARY LASER RESEARCH PROGRAMS TO CLOSER PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND DEBATE, WITH THE HOPE OF AT LEAST DELAYING ONSET OR SLOWING PROGRESS, IF NOT OUTRIGHT FORCING THEIR CANCELLATION. THIS TACTIC WOULD BE ESPECIALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE SOVIETS BECAUSE THEIR LASER WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND OPEN DEBATE AND, THUS, COULD PROCEED UNHINDERED. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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